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which they dragged towards the hole they had previously left. On arriving at it, they entered, but speedily re-appeared, having deposited their burden; and repairing once more to the cage, again loaded themselves with provision, and conveyed it away. This second time they remained within the hole for a much longer period than the first time; and when they again made their appearance, they were attended by three other mice, who, following their leaders to the cage, loaded themselves with bread as did they, and carried away their burdens to the hole. After this I saw them no more that morning, and on rising I discovered that they had carried away every particle of food that the cage contained. Nor was this an isolated instance of their white guest leading them forth to where he knew they should find provender. Day after day, whatever bread or grain I left in the cage was regularly removed, and the duration of my pet's absence was proportionately long. Wishing to learn whether hunger was the actual cause of his return, I no longer left food in his box; and in about a week afterwards, on awaking one morning, I found him sleeping upon the pillow, close to my face, having partly wormed his way under my cheek.

There was a cat in the house, an excellent mouser, and I dreaded lest she should one day meet with and destroy my poor mouse, and I accordingly used all my exertions with those in whose power it was, to obtain her dismissal. She was, however, regarded by those persons as infinitely better entitled to protection and patronage than a mouse, so I was compelled to put up with her presence. People are fond of imputing to cats a supernatural degree of sagacity: they will sometimes go so far as to pronounce them to be genuine *witches*; and really I am scarcely surprised at it, nor perhaps will the reader be, when I tell him the following anecdote.

I was one day entering my apartment, when I was filled with horror at perceiving my mouse picking up some crumbs upon the carpet, beneath the table, and the terrible cat seated upon a chair watching him with what appeared to me to be an expression of sensual anticipation and concentrated desire. Before I had time to interfere, Puss sprang from her chair, and bounded towards the mouse, who, however, far from being terrified at the approach of his natural enemy, scarcely so much as favoured her with a single look. Puss raised her paw and dealt him a gentle tap, when, judge of my astonishment if you can, the little mouse, far from running away, or betraying any marks of fear, raised himself on his legs, cocked his tail, and with a shrill and angry squeak, with which any that have kept tame mice are well acquainted, sprang at and positively *bit* the paw which had struck him. I was paralysed. I could not jump forward to the rescue. I was, as it were, petrified where I stood. But, stranger than all, the cat, instead of appearing irritated, or seeming to design mischief, merely stretched out her nose and smelt at her diminutive assailant, and then resuming her place upon the chair, purred herself to sleep. I need not say that I immediately secured the mouse within his cage. Whether the cat on this occasion knew the little animal to be a pet, and as such feared to meddle with it, or whether its boldness had disarmed her, I cannot pretend to explain: I merely state the fact; and I think the reader will allow that it is sufficiently extraordinary.

In order to guard against such a dangerous encounter for the future, I got a more secure cage made, of which the bars were so close as to preclude the possibility of egress; and singularly enough, many a morning was I amused by beholding brown mice coming from their holes in the wainscot, and approaching the cage in which their friend was kept, as if in order to condole with him on the subject of his unwonted captivity. Secure, however, as I conceived this new cage to be, my industrious pet contrived to make his escape from it, and in doing so met his death. In my room was a large bureau, with deep, old-fashioned, capacious drawers. Being obliged to go from home for a day, I put the cage containing my little friend into one of these drawers, lest any one should attempt to meddle with it during my absence. On returning, I opened the drawer, and just as I did so, heard a faint squeak, and at the same instant my poor little pet fell from the back of the drawer—lifeless. I took up his body, and, placing it in my bosom, did my best to restore it to animation. Alas! it was to no purpose. His little body had been crushed in the crevice at the back part of the drawer, through which he had been endeavouring to escape, and he was really and irrecoverably gone.

NOTE ON THE FEEDING, &c., OF WHITE MICE.—Such

of my juvenile readers as may be disposed to make a pet of one of these interesting little animals, would do well to observe the following rules:—Clean the cage out daily, and keep it dry; do not keep it in too cold a place; in winter it should be kept in a room in which there is a fire. Feed the mice on bread steeped in milk, having first squeezed the milk out, as too moist food is bad for them. Never give them cheese, as it is apt to produce fatal disorders, though the more hardy brown mice eat it with impunity. If you want to give them a treat, give them grains of wheat or barley, or if these are not to be procured, oats or rice. A little tin box of water should be constantly left in their cage, but securely fixed, so that they cannot overturn it. Let the wires be not too slight, or too long, otherwise the little animals will easily squeeze themselves between them, and let them be of iron, never of copper, as the animals are fond of nibbling at them, and the rust of the latter, or *verdigris*, would quickly poison them. White mice are to be procured at most of the bird-shops in Patrick's Close, Dublin; of the wire-workers and bird-cage makers in Edinburgh; and from all the animal fanciers in London, whose residences are to be found chiefly on the New Road and about Knightsbridge. Their prices vary from one shilling to two-and-sixpence per pair, according to their age and beauty. H. D. R.

THE PROFESSIONS.

If what are called the liberal professions could speak, they would all utter the one cry, "we are overstocked," and echo would reply "overstocked." This has long been a subject of complaint, and yet nobody seems inclined to mend the matter by making any sacrifice on his own part—just as in a crowd, to use a familiar illustration, the man who is loudest in exclaiming "dear me, what pressing and jostling people do keep here!" never thinks of lightening the pressure by withdrawing his own person from the mass. There is, however, an advantage to be derived from the utterance and reiteration of the complaint, if not by those already in the press, at least by those who are still happily clear of it.

There are many "vanities and vexations of spirit" under the sun, but this evil of professional redundancy seems to be one of very great magnitude. It involves not merely an outlay of much precious time and substance to no purpose, but in most cases unfits those who constitute the "excess" from applying themselves afterwards to other pursuits. Such persons are the primary sufferers; but the community at large participates in the loss.

It cannot but be interesting to inquire to what this tendency may be owing, and what remedy it might be useful to apply to the evil. Now, it strikes me that the great cause is the exclusive attention which people pay to the great prizes, and their total inconsideration of the number of blanks which accompany them. Life itself has been compared to a lottery; but in some departments the scheme may be so particularly bad, that it is nothing short of absolute gambling to purchase a share in it. So it is in the professions. A few arrive at great eminence, and these few excite the envy and admiration of all beholders; but they are only a few compared with the number of those who linger in the shade, and, however anxious to enjoy the sport, never once get a rap at the ball.

Again, parents are apt to look upon the mere name of a profession as a provision for their children. They calculate all the expenses of general education, professional education, and then of admission to "liberty to practise;" and finding all these items amount to a tolerably large sum, they conceive they have bestowed an ample portion on the son who has cost them "thus much monies." But unfortunately they soon learn by experience that the elevation of a profession, great as it is, does not always possess that homely recommendation of causing the "pot to boil," and that the individual for whom this costly provision has been made, cannot be so soon left to shift for himself. Here then is another cause of this evil, namely, that people do not adequately and fairly calculate the whole cost.

Of our liberal professions, the army is the only one that yields a certain income as the produce of the purchase money. But in these "piping times of peace," a private soldier in the ranks might as well attempt to verify the old song, and

"Spend half a crown out of sixpence a-day," as an ensign to pay mess-money and band-money, and all other regulation monies, keep himself in dress coat and epaulettes, and all the other *et ceteras*, upon his mere pay. The thing cannot be done. To live in any comfort in the army, a sub-

altern should have an income from some other source, equal at least in amount to that which he receives through the hands of the paymaster. The army is, in fact, an expensive profession, and of all others the least agreeable to one who is prevented, by circumscribed means, from doing as his brother officers do. Yet the mistake of venturing to meet all these difficulties is not unfrequently admitted, with what vain expectation it is needless to inquire. The usual result is such as one would anticipate, namely, that the rash adventurer, after incurring debts, or putting his friends to unlooked-for charges, is obliged after a short time to sell out, and bid farewell for ever to the unprofitable profession of arms.

It would be painful to dwell upon the situation of those who enter other professions without being duly prepared to wait their turn of employment. It is recognised as a poignantly applicable truth in the profession of the bar, that "many are called but few are chosen;" but with very few and rare exceptions indeed, the necessity of *biding* the time is certain. In the legal and medical professions there is no fixed income, however small, insured to the adventurer; and unless his circle of friends and connections be very wide and serviceable indeed, he should make up his mind for a procrastinated return and a late harvest. But how many from day to day, and from year to year, do launch their bark upon the ocean, without any such prudent foresight! The result therefore is, that vast proportion of disastrous voyages and shipwrecks of which we hear so constantly.

Such is the admitted evil—it is granted on all sides. The question is, what is to be done?—what is the remedy? Now, the remedy for an overstocked profession very evidently is, that people should forbear to enter it. I am no Malthusian on the subject of population: I desire no unnatural checks upon the increase and multiplication of her Majesty's subjects; but I should like to drain off a surplus from certain situations, and turn off the in-flowing stream into more profitable channels. I would advise parents, then, to leave the choice of a liberal profession to those who are able to live without one. Such parties can afford to wait for advancement, however long it may be in coming, or to bear up against disappointment, if such should be their lot. With such it is a safe speculation, and they may be left to indulge in it, if they think proper. With others it is not so. But it will be asked, what is to be done with the multitudes who would be diverted from the professions, if this advice were acted upon? I answer, that the money unprofitably spent upon their education, and in fees of admission to these expensive pursuits, would insure them a "good location" and a certain provision for life in Canada, or some of the colonies; and that any honourable occupation which would yield a competency ought to be preferred to "professions" which, however "liberal," hold out to the many but a very doubtful prospect of that result.

It is much to be regretted that there is a prevalent notion among certain of my countrymen that "trade" is not a "gentle" thing, and that it must be eschewed by those who have any pretensions to fashion. This unfortunate, and I must say unsound state of opinion, contributes also, I fear, in no small degree, to that professional redundancy of which we have been speaking. The supposed absolute necessity of a high classical education is a natural concomitant of this opinion. All our schools therefore are eminently classical. The University follows, as a matter of course, and then the University leads to a liberal profession, as surely as one step of a ladder conducts to another. Thus the evil is nourished at the very root. Now, I would take the liberty of advising those parents who may concur with me in the main point of over-supply in the professions, to begin at the beginning, and in the education of their children, to exchange this superabundance of Greek and Latin for the less elegant but more useful accomplishment of "ciphering." I am disposed to concur with that facetious but shrewd fellow, Mr Samuel Slick, upon the inestimable advantages of that too much neglected art—neglected, I mean, in our country here, Ireland. He has demonstrated that they do every thing by it in the States, and that without it they could do nothing. With the most profound respect to my countrymen, then, I would earnestly recommend them to cultivate it. But it may perhaps be said that there is no encouragement to mercantile pursuits in Ireland, and that if there were, there would be no necessity for me to recommend "ciphering" and its virtues to the people. To this I answer, that merchandize offers its prizes to the ingenious and venturous much rather than to those who wait

for a "highway" to be made for them. If people were resolved to live by trade, I think they would contrive to do so—many more, at least, than at present operate successfully in that department. If more of education, and more of mind, were turned in that direction, new sources of profitable industry, at present unthought of, would probably discover themselves. Much might be said on this subject, but I shall not enter further into the speculation, quite satisfied if I have thrown out a hint which may be found capable of improvement by others.

F.

GEES E.

BY MARTIN DOYLE.

THE rearing of geese might be more an object of attention to our small farmers and labourers in the vicinity of bogs and mountain tracts than it is.

The general season for the consumption of fat geese is from Michaelmas to Christmas, and the high prices paid for them in the English markets—to which they can be so rapidly conveyed from many parts of Ireland—appear to offer sufficient temptation to the speculator who has the capital and accommodation necessary for fattening them.

A well-organized system of feeding this hardy and nutritious species of poultry, in favourable localities, would give a considerable impulse to the rearing of them, and consequently promote the comforts of many poor Irish families, who under existing circumstances do not find it worth while to rear them except in very small numbers.

I am led to offer a few suggestions on this subject from having ascertained that in the Fens of Lincolnshire, notwithstanding a great decrease there in the breeding of geese from extensive drainage, one individual, Mr Clarke of Boston, fattens every year, between Michaelmas and Christmas, the prodigious number of seven thousand geese, and that another dealer at Spalding prepares for the poultry butcher nearly as many: these they purchase in lots from the farmers' wives.

Perhaps a few details of the Lincolnshire practice may be acceptable to some of the readers of this Journal:—

The farmers in the Fens keep breeding stocks proportioned to the extent of suitable land which they can command; and in order to insure the fertility of the eggs, they allow one gander to three geese, which is a higher proportion of males than is deemed necessary elsewhere. The number of goslings in each brood averages about ten, which, allowing for all casualties, is a considerable produce.

There have been extraordinary instances of individual fecundity, on which, however, it would be as absurd for any goose-breeder to calculate, as it is proverbially unwise to reckon chickens before they are hatched; and this fruitfulness is only attainable by constant feeding with stimulating food through the preceding winter.

A goose has been known to lay seventy eggs within twelve months, twenty-six in the spring, before the time of incubation, and (after bringing out seventeen goslings) the remainder by the end of the year.

The white variety is preferred to the grey or party-coloured, as the birds of this colour feed more kindly, and their feathers are worth three shillings a stone more than the others: the quality of the land, however, on which the breeding stock is to be maintained, decides this matter, generally strong land being necessary for the support of the white or larger kind. Under all circumstances a white gander is preferred, in order to have a large progeny. It has been remarked, but I know not if with reason, that Ganders are more frequently white than the females.

To state all the particulars of hatching and rearing would be superfluous, and mere repetition of what is contained in the various works on poultry. I shall merely state some of the peculiarities of the practice in the county of Lincoln.

When the young geese are brought up at different periods by the great dealers, they are put into pens together, according to their age, size, and condition, and fed on steamed potatoes and ground oats, in the ratio of one measure of oats to three of potatoes. By unremitting care as to cleanliness, pure water, and constant feeding, these geese are fattened in about three weeks, at an average cost of one penny per day each.

The *cramming* system, either by the fingers or the forcing pump, described by French writers, with the accompanying barbarities of blinding, nailing the feet to the floor, or confinement in perforated casks or earthen pots (as is said to